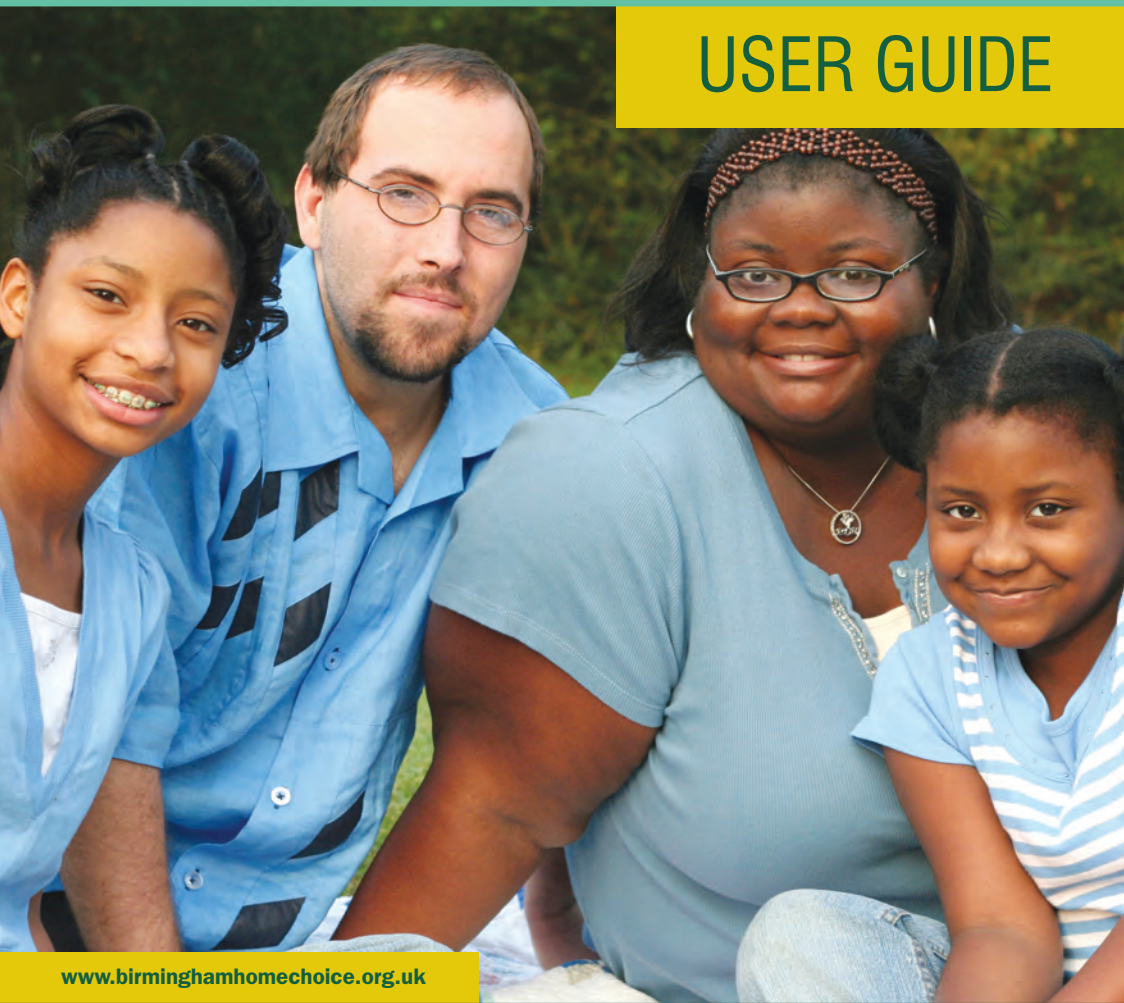


# USER GUIDE



[www.birminghamhomechoice.org.uk](http://www.birminghamhomechoice.org.uk)

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## WELCOME

**This user guide will help you to use Birmingham Home Choice – and get the home of your choice.**

Birmingham Home Choice is the way for customers to find and rent a home from Birmingham City Council, Midland Heart, Family Housing Association and some other housing associations in the city.

The scheme is open to applicants for social housing and existing tenants who want to move.

## HOW DO I FIND A HOME?

We advertise all of our available homes on the Birmingham Home Choice website or, if you don't have access to a website, in a property newsletter.

You can look at the newsletter in libraries, neighbourhood offices, Citizens Advice Bureaux and other places in Birmingham – you can find a list of these in your neighbourhood office or at **[www.birminghamhomechoice.org.uk](http://www.birminghamhomechoice.org.uk)**

- Your local library can help get you started using Birmingham Home Choice and provide internet access.
- Your local neighbourhood office can give you support and advice about Birmingham Home Choice and your other housing options. You can make an appointment with your neighbourhood office by calling 0121 303 1111.



You can tell us that you are interested in a property – we call this **making a bid**, or **bidding**.

We normally advertise properties from Thursday to Tuesday each week – we call this the **bidding cycle**.



## GETTING STARTED

### Check you are registered

To use Birmingham Home Choice, you need to be registered with Birmingham City Council, Family Housing Association or Midland Heart and have a user ID and PIN number. The properties you can see will depend on which organisation you are registered with. Your registration letter gives you details of which properties you are eligible for.

You will need to be registered with one of the organisations listed above. You can contact Midland Heart and Family Housing Association directly to join their waiting list. Alternatively you can complete a Birmingham City Council application form, available from your nearest neighbourhood office or from **[www.birminghamhomechoice.org.uk](http://www.birminghamhomechoice.org.uk)**

### Check you have got your ID and PIN number

Before you start, check you have your User ID and personal identification number (PIN) number handy. If you wish, you can write them down here:

User ID:

PIN number:

If you have lost your user ID and PIN number, please phone the organisation you are registered with – **[see page 34](#)** for the phone numbers.



## Decide how you want to view properties and bid on them

You can look through property adverts on the website, property newsletter and interactive television. Properties are advertised for one week, from one minute past midnight on Thursday to one minute to midnight on Tuesday.

You can bid on our properties using the website, interactive telephone, interactive television and text messaging.

You can change your bid on the website. This chart shows you your options, at a glance.

	Look through property adverts	Bid	Change bid
<b>Birmingham Home Choice website</b> (See page 8)	✓	✓	✓
<b>Birmingham Home Choice property newsletter</b> (See page 16)	✓	X	X
<b>Interactive Voice Recognition (IVR) telephone</b> (See page 18)	X	✓	X
<b>Interactive Digital television</b> (See page 19)	✓	✓	✓
<b>SMS text messaging</b> (See page 21)	X	✓	X

## USING THE INTERNET

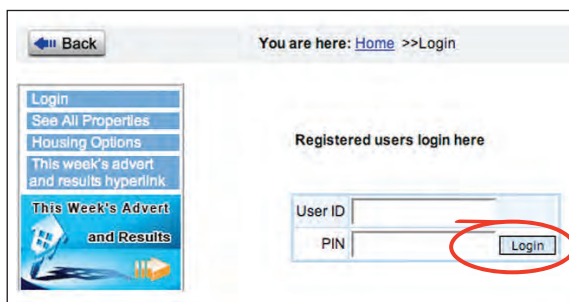
You can go online to see what properties are available each week to bid, and change your bid. You can use the internet free at any of Birmingham's libraries (see page 34). Go to **[www.birminghamhomechoice.org.uk](http://www.birminghamhomechoice.org.uk)** or search for **Birmingham Home Choice**.

### To start:

1 Click on the link to  page.



2 Click on  to go to the log in page.



3 In the box for registered users, enter your user ID and PIN number and click the **LOGIN** button.



If you have any problems logging on, please refresh the site and try logging on again.

- 4 You are now on the page that tells you the number of housing points you have, and the details of any bids that you have made (My Details page).
- 5 You can check that we have the right contact details for you by clicking on the **CONTACT INFO** box. If you need to change the details, please enter the change in the Notes/Query text box and click on the **SUBMIT** button.

Please do not use this box for submitting enquiries about your application – we will not be able to answer any queries submitted in this box.

## To view and search for properties

- 1 Click on **VIEW PROPERTIES** to see the properties that are available to choose from.

The screenshot shows a web interface for a housing register. At the top, there are tabs: 'See All Properties', 'Your Status from the Housing Register', 'Points / Bands', '54/ BANDC', 'Bedrooms / Bedspaces', and '1 / 0'. Below these are filter criteria: 'Area' (set to 'All'), 'Bedrooms' (set to 'All'), 'Building Type' (set to '1'), 'Show Partner Properties' (set to 'Include Properties'), and 'TA' (set to 'TA'). There are also checkboxes for 'Ground Floor Accommodation', 'Sheltered Accommodation', 'Available Property', 'Accessible Properties only', and 'Accessible Housing Category'. A red circle highlights the 'Search By Advert' button. Below the filters is a table of properties with columns: 'Image View', 'Advert Ref', 'Address', 'Area', 'Landlord', 'Bedrooms / Bedspaces', and 'Type'. Two properties are listed: '1000063' and '1036988'. Both are flats in Birmingham City Council, Zone A and Zone B respectively. A red line points from the 'Search By Advert' button to the second step of the instructions.

Image View	Advert Ref	Address	Area	Landlord	Bedrooms / Bedspaces	Type
	1000063	FLAT 2, 90 ABBEYFIELD ROAD, STOCKLAND GREEN, BIRMINGHAM, B23 5LN	Zone A	BIRMINGHAM CITY COUNCIL	1/0	Flat
	1036988	FLAT 2, MANTON HOUSE, NEWBURY ROAD, BIRMINGHAM, B19 2RJ	Zone B	BIRMINGHAM CITY COUNCIL	1/0	Flat

- 2 If you know the advert reference number of the property, enter it in the box labelled Search By Advert and click on **SEARCH BY ADVERT** button.

3 You can reduce the list to show only properties that you are interested in by setting a number of preferences. These are displayed in the grey Select the Filter Criteria section at the top of the page.

You can search based on criteria such as:

- a. Area of the city (see page 36).
- b. Bedroom size (Remember – you will not usually be able to bid on properties that are larger than you are eligible for. You can, however, bid on properties that are one bedroom short, as long as it won't result in you, by law, being overcrowded.)
- c. Sheltered accommodation.

**If you are looking for studio accommodation (a property where the sleeping and living space is combined), please search using 0 bedrooms.**

Once you have chosen your criteria, press

**APPLY FILTERS**





- 4 To see full details for a property, click on the button **FULL PROPERTY INFO** on the right side of your screen.

Full Property Details

[View All Properties](#) Your Status from the Housing Register Points / Bands 54/ BAND C Bedrooms / Bedspaces 1 / 0

[Click here to Bid](#)

 [See more](#)

 [Approximate Map](#)  
[Detailed Map](#)  
[Local Area Information](#)

Notes	
Property Advert Number	1000063
Address / Postcode	FLAT 2, 90 ABBEYFIELD ROAD, STOOKLAND GREEN, BIRMINGHAM, B23 5LN
Area	Zone A
Landlord / Tenure	BIRMINGHAM CITY COUNCIL /
Total Number of Bedrooms / Bedspaces	1 / 0
Property Type	Flat
Floor Level of Property	First floor
Lift Communal	N
Garden	Y
Transport Near By	N
Rent	£51.52 <a href="#">Details</a>
Opening-Closing Date	05/01/2010-07/01/2010
Heating Type	GAS CENTRAL HEATING
Accessible Housing Category	
Adapted	N
Energy Efficiency	
Council Tax Band	
Double Glazed	N
Age Restrictions	N
Pets Allowed	N
Parking	Parking Space

[Return to My Details](#)

- 5 To help you make your selection, information about the area is available on the [up my street](#) website. There is a link to this on the left of the screen. There is also a map to give you an idea of where the property is.

## To place a bid

- 1 Log in using the instructions 1 to 4 on page 8.
- 2 Click on the **VIEW PROPERTIES** button.
- 3 If you know the advert reference number of the property you are looking for, enter it in the box labelled Search By Advert and click on the **SEARCH BY ADVERT** button.

- 4 Alternatively, you can browse the available properties using the previous instructions on pages 9 and 10.
- 5 Once you have found a property you would like to bid on, click on the **FULL PROPERTY INFO** button on the right hand side of your screen.
- 6 Further information about properties and the area they are in is available from the [up my street](#) website. There is a link for this on the Full Property Details page.
- 7 Look at all the information about the property to make sure it is suitable for you.

- 8 Click on the button **CLICK HERE TO BID**.  
You will be taken to the My Details screen, where you can see all of the bids you have placed in the current bidding cycle.

The screenshot shows the 'My Details' screen. At the top, there's a header with 'Your Status from the Housing Register', 'Points / Bands' (0), and 'Bedrooms' (1). Below this is a table with property details: Property Advert Number (1058696), Address / Postcode (34 BROMFIELD CLOSE, BIRMINGHAM, B6 5HT), and Area (Zone B). To the left of the table is a photo of the property. A red circle highlights a 'Click here to Bid' button in the top left corner. Below the table, a green bar with white text says 'Info Your bid placed successfully.' A red circle highlights this bar. Below the green bar, there's a section titled 'My Current Bids' with a 'View Previous Bid Results' link and a 'Show all in last month' dropdown. Below this is a table with columns: Advert No., Address, Closing Date, Withdraw Bid, Total Bids, Bid Position, and View Date. The table contains one row with the following data: 1300464, JUBILEE COURT, 178 ARDEN ROAD, SALTLEY, BIRMINGHAM, 20/07/2010, Withdraw Bid, 14, 14/14, 27/07/2010.

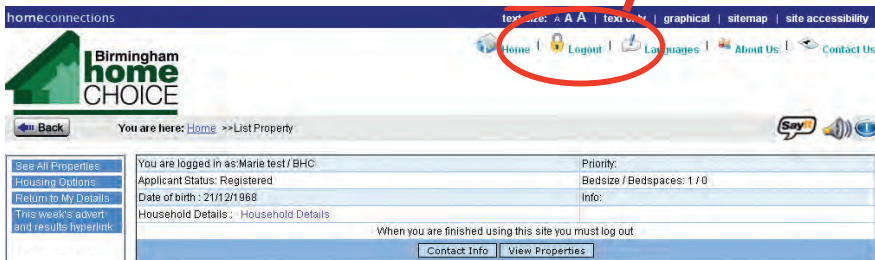
Advert No.	Address	Closing Date	Withdraw Bid	Total Bids	Bid Position	View Date
1300464	JUBILEE COURT, 178 ARDEN ROAD, SALTLEY, BIRMINGHAM	20/07/2010	<a href="#">Withdraw Bid</a>	14	14/14	27/07/2010

- 9 Above your bid is a green **INFO** bar telling you that you have placed your bid.

10 Click on **VIEW PROPERTIES** to continue browsing and bidding on properties. Remember, you can place up to three bids each cycle.

11 Once you have placed your bid, check your contact details are correct so we can phone you. You can do this by clicking on the **CONTACT INFO** button.

12 If you have finished bidding click on Log out at the top of the screen to end your session.



13 You can review your bids before the end of the cycle, **see page 14**. If you have been shortlisted to view a property, a housing officer will contact you to invite you to attend the viewing **see page 25**. If the property is owned by a housing association, they may invite you to an interview instead. You can also check the invitation on the My Details screen. This will give you the date and time for your viewing.

If you have not heard from us by the viewing date, then you have been unsuccessful. Please do not attend the viewing. You will not be able to view the property.

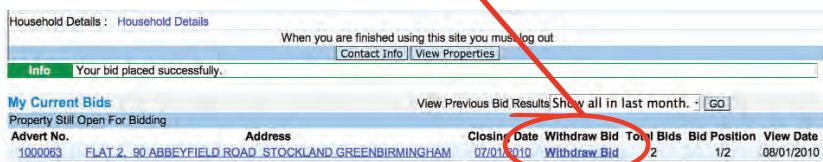
If you want some feedback on why you were not successful, [see page 26](#). You can also read our factsheet ‘How to make the best use of your bid’ on our website [www.birminghamhomechoice.org.uk](http://www.birminghamhomechoice.org.uk)

## To change your bid online

You can change your bid online or through digital TV during the bidding cycle. You can do this at any time and there is no penalty for this. However, you can only place bids on three properties in each cycle.

If you have placed three bids and wish to bid on another property, you will have to withdraw one of your other bids. To check your bid online, and change it if you want to:

- 1 Follow steps 1 to 4 on [pages 8 and 9](#).
- 2 You are now in the My Details page. Here you will see a list of the properties that you are currently bidding on.
- 3 Find the property on the list that you wish to change your bid on and click on [withdraw bid](#).



Household Details : [Household Details](#)

When you are finished using this site you must log out

[Contact Info](#) | [View Properties](#)

**Info** Your bid placed successfully.

**My Current Bids** [View Previous Bid Results](#) Show all in last month. [GO](#)

Property Still Open For Bidding

Advert No.	Address	Closing Date	Withdraw Bid	Total Bids	Bid Position	View Date
1000063	FLAT 2, 90 ABBEYFIELD ROAD, STOCKLAND GREEN, BIRMINGHAM	07/01/2010	<a href="#">Withdraw Bid</a>	2	1/2	08/01/2010

- 4 You will be taken back to the full property details screen. In place of the [CLICK HERE TO BID](#) button, you will see a button labelled [CLICK HERE TO WITHDRAW BID](#).

5 Click on this button to withdraw your bid. You will be returned to the My Details page.

6 The **INFO** bar confirms that your bid has been withdrawn.

## Useful features of the Birmingham Home Choice website

**To listen to our website:** Click on the Say It icon.

**Translation:** Click on languages and pick the language you require.



**Large font:** Click on Text size at the top of the screen.

Our website is designed to be easy to use for people with hearing and sight difficulties. It is compatible with most plug in devices.

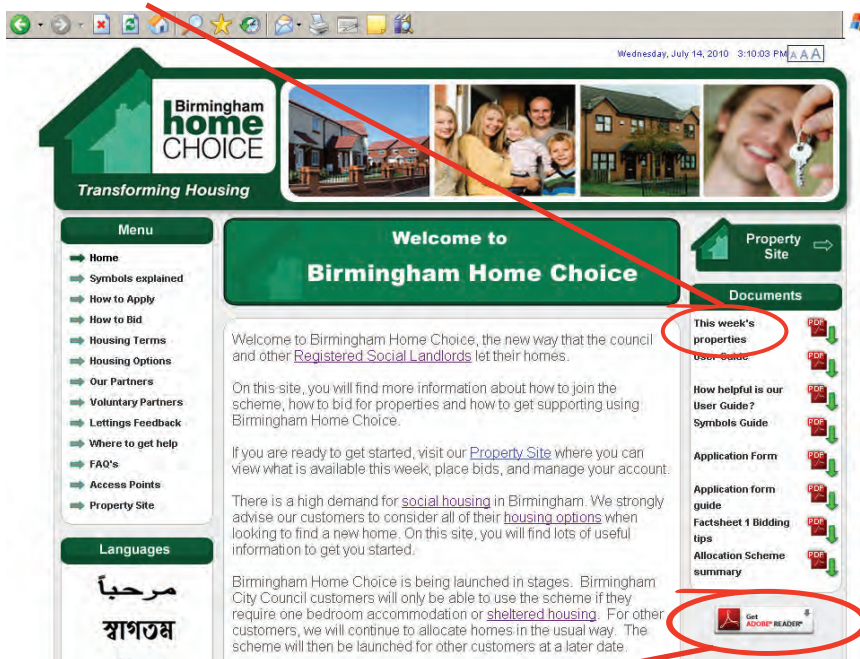
**Text only option:** Click on Text only at the top of the screen. This allows you to view the website with no graphics and to change the colours of the text and background. You won't be able to view symbols with the text only option.

# USING THE PROPERTY ADVERT NEWSLETTER TO VIEW PROPERTIES

You can download or read a property newsletter, which will contain details of all the properties available that week.

## To download a copy of the property advert newsletter

- 1 Go to the Birmingham Home Choice website **[www.birminghamhomechoice.org.uk](http://www.birminghamhomechoice.org.uk)** and click on 'This week's properties'.



- 2 You need to have Adobe Reader on your computer – you can download this for free here.

- 3 This week's property advert newsletter will be on the list. You can either save or print a copy.

## **To read the property advert newsletter**

You can look at the property advert newsletter at any library or neighbourhood office. This lists all the available properties each week.

Your local library or neighbourhood office has a list of other places across Birmingham where you can view a copy of the property advert newsletter.

To make a bid, you can use the Birmingham Home Choice website [\(page 8\)](#), the interactive voice recognition telephone service [\(page 18\)](#), interactive digital television [\(page 19\)](#) and SMS text messaging [\(page 21\)](#).

## USING THE INTERACTIVE VOICE RECOGNITION (IVR) TELEPHONE SERVICE TO PLACE A BID

The IVR telephone service allows you to use your touch-tone telephone to place a bid. It is available in English and nine other languages.

The IVR telephone number is **0845 330 3183** (local rates).

You will need your user ID, PIN number and the property advert reference number to select a property.

All you have to do is call the number and follow some very easy steps. There are instructions to guide you through these steps. In less than two minutes you can register your property selection over the telephone. You can place up to three bids in each cycle.

When you have completed recording your property selection this will be confirmed with you before the call is ended.

Remember, if you want to change your bid, you need to use the Birmingham Home Choice website ([page 14](#)). You can place three bids in one call.

## **USING INTERACTIVE DIGITAL TELEVISION TO VIEW PROPERTIES AND PLACE A BID**

If you are a Sky, Virgin or Freeview customer, you can place a bid using your remote control and interactive digital television (known as Looking Local). You can also use this service if you have a mobile phone that can access the internet.

### **Sky customers**

To access Birmingham Home Choice, press the interactive button on your remote and select DirectGov from the menu. On the welcome page press select on your remote and then choose the option for Local Services. Follow the options through the Midlands and the West Midlands to Birmingham. You will then need to choose the option for Other Services. Choose the option called Housing Services. Birmingham Home Choice is on the menu, along with our other services.

### **Virgin customers**

To access Birmingham Home Choice, press the interactive button on your remote and select either News & Info or Your Community, then chose the option for Looking Local. Follow the options through the Midlands and the West Midlands to Birmingham. You will then need to choose the option for Other Services. Choose the option called Housing Services. Birmingham Home Choice is on the menu, along with our other services.

## Freeview

To access Birmingham Home Choice by Freeview, you need to make sure that your telephone line/broadband connection is connected to your Freeview box. You won't be able to use this service with some older boxes.

For more information on how to access this, please contact Freeview on **08701 111 270**. These calls can be charged at up to 8p per minute, depending on your telephone provider.

## Mobile phones

If your phone can access the internet, you can access Looking Local through our mobile site, [www.lookinglocal.gov.uk/digitv/cds/birmingham](http://www.lookinglocal.gov.uk/digitv/cds/birmingham).

Choose the option for Other Services and then Housing Services. Birmingham Home Choice is on the menu, along with our other services.

## USING SMS TEXT MESSAGING TO PLACE A BID

You can place a bid using a mobile phone. You will need your user ID, PIN number and the property advert reference number to do this.

- 1 Open a new text message on your phone.
- 2 Enter '**bid**' at the start of the message then # followed by your user ID number. You then need to enter # again, followed by your PIN. Then add another #, followed by the property advert reference number, followed by #. Here's an example:

Your user ID is: **987654**

Your Pin number: **010164**

Property advert reference: **123456**

Your text message would look like this:

**bid#987654#010164#123456#**

- 3 You can bid for up to three properties. To add more bids, you need to add another # and the next property reference number. You can place up to three bids in each bidding cycle.

If the # key is not on your telephone keypad, check your mobile's symbol options or the instruction booklet.

Once you've completed the text, send it to  
**07800 002 429.**



We will send you a text to confirm we have received your bid within one hour of sending it (assuming your mobile phone reception is working). If you have not put the word **'bid'** at the start of your text, it will not be processed and you will not get a reply.

If your bids are valid you will get a message that lists the property advert references you have bidden on.

We will send a text listing any invalid advert numbers you have used and any bids you were not eligible for.

The system used is fully automated, so if you have any questions about your bids, please call **0121 675 5779**. Most mobile texts cost around 10p to send.

You could save a sample bid in your drafts or archive section of your mobile, so that you can just change the property advert numbers the next time you bid.

You cannot change your bid via text. If you need to change it, you can withdraw your bid online ([see page 14](#)).

## WHAT HAPPENS AFTER YOU HAVE MADE A BID

You can place your bid for properties at any time within each bidding cycle.

You can make three bids within each bidding cycle, but you will only be able to view one property in each bidding cycle.

### Shortlisting

Once the bidding cycle has closed, we will look at all the bids and rank them in order. People who have the most housing points and are eligible will be at the top of the list and people with the fewest housing points or who are not eligible will be at the bottom.

It is important to remember that your final bid position is not necessarily your final position on our shortlist. We will normally shortlist three people (however, at times we may shortlist up to six) and ask them to view the property. We shortlist you for the property that represents your best bid position at that time. Sometimes the shortlisting position will be different from the bid position; we will let you know if this is the case when we contact you. When you have been shortlisted you will not be able to bid for another property until we know who is going to accept the property you will be viewing.

Sometimes you will be among the top applicants for more than one property:

- If this happens, we will invite you to view the property where you are highest on the shortlist.

- If you are at the top of more than one shortlist, we will telephone you to ask you which property you would like to view.
- If we can't get hold of you, we will write to you and invite you to view the property that you have the highest bidding position for and which has the earliest viewing date.
- You will not be able to view more than one property.

You can find out more about how we choose who gets the property on [page 29](#).

### **Inviting you to view the property**

If you are on a shortlist, a housing officer will telephone you to check the details of your housing application are correct and to ask if you want to view the property. This means that it is important that we have up-to-date contact details for you.

We will give you the date and time of the viewing and ask you to bring proof of identity for you and anyone else in your household who is going to move with you. We will tell you which proofs of identity you need to bring along.

Please remember to bring these documents with you. If you are successful at the viewing, the landlord will need proof of identity and if you do not have this information, the property may be let to the next customer on the shortlist. We will also confirm your position on the shortlist.

If the property you have been shortlisted for is owned by a housing association (also known as a registered social landlord), they may invite you to an interview before the viewing.

If we can't reach you by telephone, we will write to you on the same day to tell you the date and time of viewing.

### **Viewing the property**

Normally, you will view the property along with other customers on the shortlist. The viewing may take place while the property is being repaired. It will be made safe so that you can be shown round the rooms.

**Please make sure that you arrive in good time for your viewing. We can't rearrange viewings, so if you are late you may lose your opportunity to view the property and we may offer it to someone else.**

Please do not bring family and friends with you to view the property. If you do, they may be asked to wait outside.

A housing officer will show you around the property. The person who is top of the shortlist will be asked if they want to become the tenant. If they do not, the housing officer will offer it to the person who is number two on the shortlist, and so on.

If more than one customer with the same number of housing points wants to move into the property, we will offer it to the person who has been on the Housing Register the longest.

If the property is being repaired, and you want to accept it, we will ask you to sign an acceptance form that day. When the repairs are complete, we will ask you to come and sign for the tenancy and we will give you the keys to the property.

### **Turning down a property**

Most customers who do not want to accept a property after they have viewed it will not be penalised. However, this does not apply to some customers who are owed a legal duty to be rehoused by Birmingham City Council. If we penalise you for refusing a property, we will tell you beforehand that this will apply to you.

If you don't turn up for your viewing without telling us, or consistently refuse suitable properties, we will review your application and we may reduce your housing points.

### **Getting feedback**

Feedback about your bids is located on the My Details page of the Birmingham Home Choice website. My Current Bids lists the properties you have bid on and what your final position is on the list. The feedback tells you:

- about your current and previous bids
- where you are in the shortlist for any current bids
- if you were unsuccessful where you were in the shortlist and if there was a particular reason that you were unsuccessful.

The feedback also tells you how many points the successful applicant had, and when they joined the housing register.

We also provide information on all our lettings each week on our website. To see this you can visit **[www.birminghamhomechoice.org.uk](http://www.birminghamhomechoice.org.uk)** and click on Lettings Feedback.



This information will tell you what kinds of customers are successful at bidding on which properties in which areas. It will not give any customer details.

You can use this information to make the best use of your bids, by placing bids on properties where people with similar points to you are being successful. For more information please see our factsheet 'How to make the best use of your bid' on our website

**[www.birminghamhomechoice.org.uk](http://www.birminghamhomechoice.org.uk)**

## MORE USEFUL INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR APPLICATION

### How we choose who gets the property

You can only bid for properties that you are eligible for. Birmingham City Council uses its allocations scheme to decide the number of bedrooms a person is eligible for.

This way, we can be fair about who gets which property. For example, larger households will be eligible for larger properties.

Your registration certificate will tell you what size and type of property you are eligible for under our allocations scheme. If you are unsure, please contact your local neighbourhood office.

For more detailed information on how we make this decision, please see our allocations summary, available from your local neighbourhood office or on our website **[www.birminghamhomechoice.org.uk](http://www.birminghamhomechoice.org.uk)**.

The shortlist of applicants will be based on people's housing needs points. The number of points you have is on your registration certificate. If you have any questions about your points, please contact your local neighbourhood office.

The applicants with the most points who are eligible for the property will be selected to view the property.

## **Larger properties**

There is a big demand for larger properties in Birmingham.

Rooms in larger properties vary in size. This means that a three-bedroom property may be too small for you and your family, while another three-bedroom property will be large enough.

So a property may be too small for you, even if it has the right number of bedrooms. In this case, we won't invite you to view it.

## **Adapted housing**














If you have a disability or health problem, and think you need adapted housing, please contact your neighbourhood office.

## **Property symbols**







These symbols tell you about the property, including the location, type of house, number of bedrooms, type of heating and so on.

The symbols give customers an easy way of seeing what's available, and which properties they are eligible for. For example, some properties are for people aged 55 and over only.

The symbols are also designed to help customers with language and learning difficulties.

What the symbol means	Symbol
Zone A Sutton, Erdington and Perry Barr districts	
Zone B Ladywood district	
Zone C Hodge Hill and Yardley districts	
Zone D Hall Green and Selly Oak districts	
Zone E Northfield and Edgbaston districts	
House	
Maisonette	
Flat	
Bungalow	
'Low rise/conversion'	
Age restriction 18+, 25+, 30+, 35+, 40+, 45+, 50+, 55+, 60+	<b>25+</b>
Lift	
A Suitable for wheelchair	
B Suitable for people who cannot use stairs or bath	

What the symbol means	Symbol
<b>C</b> Suitable for people who can climb stairs	
<b>D</b> Suitable for people who can use a bath but not climb stairs	
<b>Energy efficiency</b> A is the most energy efficient, G is the least energy efficient (Symbol for C energy efficiency shown)	
<b>Double glazing</b>	
<b>Parking</b>	
<b>Council tax band</b> A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H (Symbol for Council tax band D shown)	
<b>Garden</b>	
<b>No garden</b>	
<b>Shared garden</b>	
<b>Number of bedrooms</b> Studio, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 10+	
<b>Sheltered</b>	
<b>Warm air heating</b>	
<b>Central heating</b>	
<b>District heating</b>	

What the symbol means	Symbol
Underfloor heating	
Economy 7	
Electric heating	
Gas heating	
Floor level G, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30	
No pets allowed	

## Change of circumstances

If your circumstances change, please tell us. For example, please tell us if you are pregnant or if someone leaves your household. You can do this by completing a Change of Circumstances form, available from your neighbourhood office or at **[www.birmingham.gov.uk/finding-a-home](http://www.birmingham.gov.uk/finding-a-home)**

If you change where you live, you will need to complete a new Housing Application so that we can ensure your details and assessment are still correct. This form is available from your neighbourhood office, or from our website, **[www.birminghamhomechoice.org.uk](http://www.birminghamhomechoice.org.uk)**

It is important to keep your details with us up to date. If your circumstances change and you do not tell us, we may be unable to shortlist you.

## Change of contact details

If your contact details change, it is important that you tell us so that we can telephone you and invite you to view a property. You can change your details by clicking on the **CONTACT INFO** button on the Birmingham Home Choice website (page 9) or contact your local neighbourhood office.

## Access points

There are many access points in Birmingham where you can use a computer, free of charge, or look at the most recent property newsletter.

These access points include:

- The Property Shop at the Central Library, Chamberlain Square, Birmingham B3 3HQ
- Your local library
- Neighbourhood offices
- Community and voluntary groups
- Wardlow Road Centre
- Northfield Town Centre Partnership Shop

Ask at your local neighbourhood office for details of your nearest access point, or you can visit **[www.birminghamhomechoice.org.uk](http://www.birminghamhomechoice.org.uk)**

## Using the internet in Birmingham's libraries

To use the internet at one of Birmingham's libraries, you need to become a member. You can do this at any library in Birmingham.

Simply take one proof of your name and address (for example, a gas or electricity bill) and a member of the library staff will register you there and then.

They will give your library card and library PIN number so that you can use the library's computer and go on the internet, and borrow books, DVDs and CDs. Computers can be booked free of charge for up to one hour a day.

## **CONTACT DETAILS**

### **Visit us at**

[www.birminghamhomechoice.org.uk](http://www.birminghamhomechoice.org.uk)

### **Email**

[enquiry@birminghamhomechoice.org.uk](mailto:enquiry@birminghamhomechoice.org.uk)

### **Telephone for enquiries**

Birmingham City Council: 0121 675 5779

Family Housing Association: 0121 766 1100

Midland Heart: 0345 6020540

### **SMS text**

07800 002 429

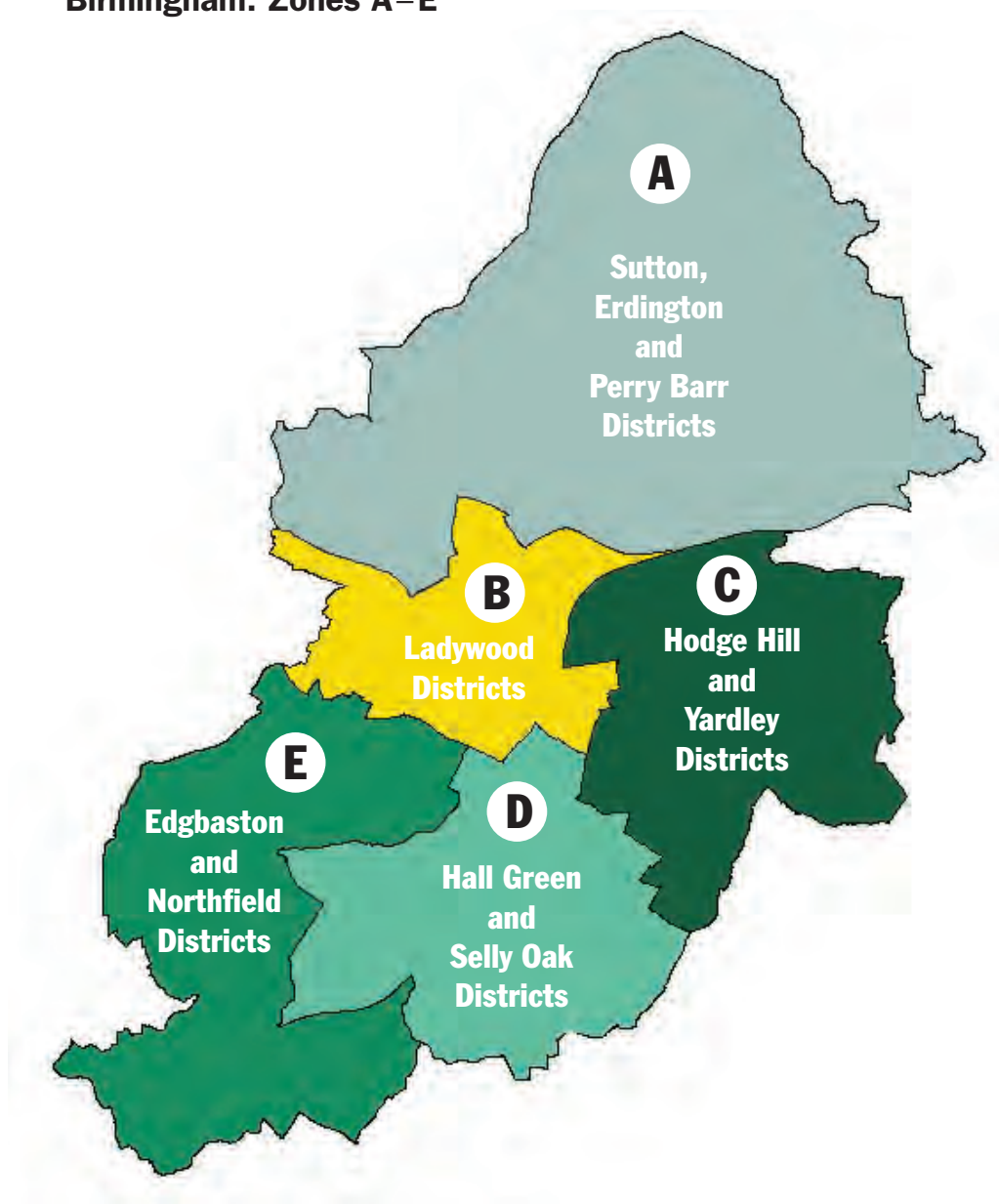
(Most texts cost around 10p to send)

### **IVR telephone**

0845 330 3183

(Local rates)

## Birmingham: Zones A–E



## **BIRMINGHAM HOME CHOICE TERMS**

### **Access points**

There are many public places in Birmingham where customers can access the Birmingham Home Choice property newsletter and, in some cases, use a computer to access the website

[www.birminghamhomechoice.org.uk](http://www.birminghamhomechoice.org.uk)

 See User Guide page 34

### **Assisted bidding**

If someone is not able to place a bid themselves, a friend, family member or support worker can bid for them. This is called assisted bidding.

### **Bidding, or making a bid**

This is the term used when customers express an interest in a particular property.

No money is involved.

 See User Guide page 5

### **Bidding cycle**

The council advertises all its available properties. This is known as the bidding cycle.

 See User Guide page 5

### **Birmingham Home Choice**

This is the name of Birmingham's choice based lettings scheme.

### **Choice based lettings scheme**

This is the general name for schemes, such as Birmingham Home Choice run by councils and registered social landlords. The schemes allow customers to see all the available properties each week, and put in a bid for the ones they would like to move to.

### **Housing association**

This is another name for a registered social landlord – a not-for-profit organisation that provides rented accommodation.

## **Housing points**

We give some people on the Housing Register housing points, to recognise their housing needs. We follow our allocations scheme when we award points, so that the process is fair and open.

## **Housing Register**

The name of our housing waiting list. If you are on our waiting list, you will need to take part in Birmingham Home Choice.

## **Neighbourhood office**

Birmingham City Council has a number of neighbourhood offices around the city, where you can speak to staff about Birmingham Home Choice, as well as other housing and council-related queries. You can find your nearest office by calling 0121 303 1111.

## **Registered social landlord**

This is another name for a housing association – a not-for-profit organisation that provides rented accommodation.

## **Registration certificate**

When you join the Housing Register, we write to you with a registration certificate. This tells you how many housing points you have and what type of properties you can bid for.

## **Shortlist**

After a property has been advertised for around a week (the bidding cycle), we draw up a shortlist of up to six applicants. We invite these applicants to view the property. This is based on your housing needs points.



**See User Guide page 23**

## **Social housing**

The name given to homes let by local councils and registered social landlords.

## **Studio accommodation**

Self contained flat with one main room and kitchen and bathroom. The main room is the living room and bedroom in one.

## **Tenant Management Organisations (TMOs)**

TMOs are independent organisations, formed and run by residents who are elected by their neighbours. They represent tenants and manage a number of services on behalf of the council, although Birmingham City Council continues to be the overall landlord of the properties.

## **Viewing**

Customers on the shortlist for a property are invited to visit, or view the property.

 [See User Guide page 24](#)

# APPLICATION QUERIES

If you are a Birmingham City Council customer and you have a query about your application, your points, or you wish to advise of about a change in your circumstances (including updating your contact details), you can contact us using the numbers below.

## Public Telephone Numbers

### Accessing Needs Team

District	Telephone Number
Ladywood	0121 303 5668 0121 303 4005
Hodge Hill and Yardley Wood	0121 303 1495 0121 303 1559
Hall Green and Selly Oak	0121 303 4005 0121 675 4350
Edgbaston Northfield	0121 303 5245 0121 464 5607
Erdington, Perry Barr and Sutton	0121 303 6520 0121 464 4119

If you are a Midland Heart or Family Customer, please contact your Housing Association directly.

## This image shows a full page of white paper with horizontal dotted lines, resembling notebook paper. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There is no handwriting or other markings on the paper.

## Notes

[illegible]



**This is important.** If you do not understand this document then please ask a friend or relative, who speaks English, to contact your local neighbourhood office or housing team on your behalf. We will then arrange for an interpreter to meet with you.

ARABIC هذه الرسالة مهمة، فإن لم تفهمها نرجو أن تطلب من أحد أصدقائك أو أقربائك ممن يتكلمون الإنجليزية أن يتصل بمكتب المحي "تيرهود أوفوس" المحلي أو فريق الإسكان نيابة عنك. بعد ذلك سنرتب للقاء بك مع وجود مترجم فوري.

BENGALI এটা খুবই গুরুত্বপূর্ণ। আপনি এই দলিলটি বুঝতে না পারলে দয়া করে ইংরেজীতে কথা বলতে পারেন একজন আপনার একজন বন্ধু-বান্ধব বা আত্মীয়কে আপনার পক্ষ হয়ে আপনার স্থানীয় নেইবারহুড অফিস বা হাউজিং টিম এর সঙ্গে যোগাযোগ করতে বলুন। এরপর আমরা আপনার সঙ্গে সাফাৎ করার ব্যবস্থা করব এবং এতে সহায়তার জন্য একজন ইন্টারপ্রিটার রাখা হবে।

CHINESE 此事極為重要，如果你看不懂這份文件，請找一位會講英語的親戚或朋友代你接觸當地的鄰舍辦事處或房屋服務隊。然後我們會安排傳譯員一起見你。

FARSI این اطلاعات بسیارمهم است. اگر محتوی این مدرک را نمی فهمید، لطفاً از یک دوست یا خویشاوند تان که به زبان انگلیسی صحبت کرده میتواند خواهش کنید که از طرف شما بانیبرهود آفس یا هوزنگ تیم محل شما تماس بگیرد. بعداً برای شما مترجم فراهم می کنیم که باشما ملاقات کند.

FRENCH Message important. Si vous ne comprenez pas ce document, demandez à un ami ou à un membre de votre famille qui parle anglais, de prendre contact en votre nom avec votre bureau de voisinage ou avec l'équipe du logement. Nous prendrons alors les dispositions nécessaires pour qu'un interprète soit présent.

KURDISH نەم دەقە نووسینە گرتە. ئەگەر تەم نووسینە نەتەمەشتیت تەکیە نەم کاتە داوا بکە لە برادەرێک یان خەزەمێک، کە بە زمانی نینگلیزی دەنوێ، پێوەندی بکات بە نووسینگەی هەوسەنگی "نەبەر هود توفەسی" ناوچەمەکت یان بە تەیمی خەووبەر لە جیاتی تۆ. نەم کاتە تەمە هەمەستەین بە رێکەستنی چاوپێکەوتنێک لەمەکت وە بە ئەمادەبوونی وەرگیرێ زمان.

POLISH Ważne! Jeżeli nie rozumiesz treści tego dokumentu, zwróć się o pomoc do przyjaciela lub krewnego, który mówi po angielsku, aby skontaktował się w Twoim imieniu z lokalnym Biurem Środowiskowym (Neighbourhood Office) lub wydziałem do spraw mieszkaniowych (Housing Team). Załatwimy wtedy dla Ciebie tłumacza.

PUNJABI ਇਹ ਗੱਲ ਬੜੀ ਜ਼ਰੂਰੀ ਹੈ। ਜੇ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਇਸ ਪਰਚੇ ਦੀ ਸਮਝ ਨਹੀਂ ਲੱਗਦੀ ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਅਪਣੇ ਕਿਸੇ ਅੰਗਰੇਜ਼ੀ ਬੋਲਣ ਵਾਲੇ ਦੋਸਤ ਜਾਂ ਰਿਸ਼ਤੇਦਾਰ ਨੂੰ ਕਹੋ ਕਿ ਉਹ ਤੁਹਾਡੇ ਵਾਸਤੇ ਸਥਾਨਕ ਨੇਬਰਹੁਡ ਔਫਿਸ ਜਾਂ ਹਾਊਸਿੰਗ ਟੀਮ ਨਾਲ ਸੰਪਰਕ ਕਰੇ। ਉਸ ਤੋਂ ਬਾਅਦ ਅਸੀਂ ਕਿਸੇ ਦੇਭਾਸੀਏ ਰਾਹੀਂ ਤੁਹਾਡੇ ਨਾਲ ਗੱਲ ਕਰਨ ਦਾ ਪ੍ਰਬੰਧ ਕਰਾਂਗੇ।

PUSHTO داویر مهم معلومات دی. که ناسی په دی سند نه پوهیږی نو مهربانی و کړی دخپل یو ملگری یا خپلوان نه چه په انگریزی ژبه خبری کولای شی غوښتنه و کړی چه متناسی له خو امناسی دسیمې نیبرهود آفس یا هوزنگ تیم سره په تماس کی شی. بیا به مونږ ترجمان برابر کړو چه متناسی سره کتنه و کړی.

SOMALI Hadii aadan fahmin waxa kuqoran boog yarahan (warqadan) fadlan waydiiso qof saaxiibkaa ama qaraabadaada oo kuhadla afka ingiriisiga inuu kuu waco xafiiska dariska ee kuu dhaw (neighbourhood office) ama kooxda guryaha asaga oo adiga kumatalaya. Markaa kadib waxaan kuu balaaminaynaa afceliye (turiijaabaan).

URDU یہ دستاویز اہم ہے۔ اگر آپ اس دستاویز کو سمجھنے سے قاصر ہیں تو براہ کرم انگریزی زبان سے واقف اپنے کسی دوست یا رشتہ دار سے کہئے کہ وہ آپ کی جانب سے آپ کے مقامی نمبر ہوز آفس یا ہاؤسنگ ٹیم سے رابطہ کریں۔ ہم پھر آپ سے ملاقات کرنے کیلئے ایک ترجمان زبان کا انتظام کر دیں گے۔

**If you would like this leaflet in large print,  
Braille or audio CD, please call 0121 675 5779.**